

APRIL 14, 2024

2.2

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

Jesus is the Lord God who rules the raging sea.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

Since Jesus can sleep during a great tempest, I do not need to fear a storm.

SERIES 2: WORSHIPPING OUR SOVEREIGN GOD

JESUS CALMS THE STORM



FOCUS VERSE: Matthew 8:27

But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

LESSON TEXT: Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:23-25



Lesson Title: Jesus Calms the Storm

Icebreaker: If you could have one masterpiece painting hanging in your home, what would it be?

- I. THE PSALMS ANTICIPATE THE CALMING OF THE SEA
 - A. Psalms and Songs
 - B. God Is the One Who Calms the Seas and Waves
 - C. I Will Trust God to Calm the Storms in My Life
 - » *What storm has God stilled in your life?*
- II. THE OLD TESTAMENT MEETS THE NEW TESTAMENT
 - A. The Storm's Fury and the Disciples' Fear
 - » *Have you ever wondered if God cares about what you're going through? How does He show you He does?*
 - B. Jesus' Authority over Nature
 - » *When the disciples woke Jesus, what do you think they expected Jesus to do?*
 - C. I Will Trust Jesus with My Storms
- III. AFTER THE STORM
 - A. Jesus' Rebuke and the Disciples' Response
 - » *How would you have responded if you were one of the disciples?*
 - B. I Will Worship Jesus as Lord
 - » *What verse(s) gives you peace that Jesus is in control of all life's storms?*

Prayer Focus

- Expressing our thanks to God for His rescue from danger
- Praying that we will trust Jesus regardless of life's circumstances

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:23-25

The story of Jesus rising from sleep to calm the stormy sea demonstrated Jesus had all the power of the Old Testament Jehovah Himself. Psalm 65:7 describes God as one who “stilleth the noise of the seas [and] the noise of their waves,” and Psalm 104:6-7 describes God as one who could control the waters by a rebuke. In Job 38:8-11, God described Himself as the one able to set limits on and control the seas. The storm caused the disciples to be struck with both fear and wonder as they observed Jesus demonstrating power over even the most uncontrollable forces of nature.

This story exists in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Small nuances exist between versions of the story. For example, in Matthew’s version the disciples called Jesus “Lord;” in Mark’s version they called Jesus “Teacher;” and in Luke’s version they called Jesus “Master” twice. Each appellation appropriately describes an element of Jesus’ actions in this story. Jesus was a teacher, instructing the disciples on important lessons about faith in God and His full identity. Jesus showed Himself as master through His control over the forces of nature. Jesus revealed Himself as Lord by demonstrating Himself as the all-powerful LORD of the Old Testament.

In each of these three Gospels, this story exists immediately before Jesus cast demons out of the man (or men) living in a graveyard in the region of the Gadarenes (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39). The story of Jesus calming the storm parallels that of the healing of the demoniac(s). In the first, the sea was in constant tempest until Jesus spoke; then there was peace. In the second miracle, the demoniacs were constantly tortured until Jesus spoke; then there was peace (*Apostolic Study Bible*, commentary on Mark 4:39-40). By these two instances, Jesus demonstrated supernatural power over all forces of evil that may come against humanity—external and internal, above and below, physical and spiritual.

THE STORM CAUSED THE DISCIPLES TO BE STRUCK WITH BOTH FEAR AND WONDER AS THEY OBSERVED JESUS DEMONSTRATING POWER OVER EVEN THE MOST UNCONTROLLABLE FORCES OF NATURE.

DAY 1

Matthew 8:23-25

²³ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

²⁴ And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

²⁵ And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

Biblical Insight

Only in Matthew's version of this narrative do the disciples yell "save us" to Jesus. Mark and Luke's versions do not contain any request directed toward Jesus. It is unclear what the disciples intended by the request to be saved. They likely intended for Jesus to help steer the boat or bail water rather than sleep. Whatever they expected, the disciples obviously did not expect Jesus to miraculously stop the storm, because when that happened, the disciples "marvelled" (Matthew 8:27).

Daily Devotion

A seventeen-year-old girl was sitting in class when excruciating pain overwhelmed her body. Doctor visits, painful medical tests, and sleepless nights became her reality. Yet, through the pain, she kept going to church, going through prayer lines, and praying for healing.

As the days became years, the young lady began to realize that while God could heal her, He chose to answer her prayers in His way. He chose to help her find ways to better handle her pain. During a youth service six years later, the group laid hands on her, and she was made whole.

If you feel as though God is not answering your prayers, take time to reflect upon whether you are only wanting God to respond in a certain way. Perhaps, God has been answering your prayers all along, but you are simply expecting Him to navigate the boat safely to shore instead of dealing with the root of the problem and calming the storm.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

Matthew 8:26-27

²⁶ And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

²⁷ But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

Biblical Insight

Matthew's version of this story is the only one in which Jesus chastised the disciples for having little faith before He calmed the storm. In Mark's and Luke's accounts, Jesus provided this comment after He calmed the storm. Like Luke, Matthew did not include the words that Jesus spoke to the storm but simply stated that Jesus rebuked the winds and sea.

Daily Devotion

Charles Kettering, the former head of research at General Motors, once said, "No one would ever have crossed the ocean if he could have gotten off the ship in the storm."

Early European exploration was heavily influenced by storms. According to the *Coastal Heritage Magazine*, "hurricanes have altered the course of history."

If not for hurricanes, perhaps South Carolinians would speak French today and the Puritans would have settled in the South instead of Massachusetts. Without storms, the Spaniards may have built forts in the Gulf of Mexico while the French Huguenots might have settled in Maryland.

Storms transformed the dreams of explorers, re-routed colonists to different locations, and became the source for progress. The same can be said of the storms of life.

If you are facing a storm, do not give up. See the storm as an opportunity for God to change your dreams, re-route your focus, and help you progress in your relationship with Him.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

Mark 4:37-38

³⁷ And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

³⁸ And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

Biblical Insight

Mark's Gospel depicts Jesus as being slightly more comfortable in the boat than Matthew's and Luke's do, since Mark's account is the only one that records Jesus sleeping on a pillow. In Mark, the disciples' words to Jesus are also more confrontational: "carest thou not that we perish?" Unlike the other two versions, this charge accused Jesus of not only being unable to stop the storm, but even worse, uncaring about the danger the disciples were in.

Daily Devotion

For three years, sounds of hammering echoed throughout Belfast, Ireland, as the *RMS Titanic* was being built. Four days into her maiden voyage, the Titanic sank. Belfast became silent except for the sound of weeping. People in Belfast struggled with mourning, embarrassment, and guilt in the aftermath of the Titanic's demise.

One day at a church of which sixteen parishioners died on the Titanic, the pastor preached from Mark 4:35-41. In the sermon the pastor reminded not only his congregation, but also Belfast, that there was only one boat in the history of the world that was unsinkable, the boat occupied by the Savior. Then looking out at his congregation, the pastor reminded the troubled church that the only hearts that will weather the storms of life are the hearts with Jesus inside. Be encouraged—if you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you will weather the storm you are facing.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*



DAY 4

Mark 4:39-41

³⁹ And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

⁴⁰ And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Biblical Insight

Despite this narrative being inextricably linked with the famous phrase “Peace, be still,” Mark’s version is the only one that records Jesus saying these words. The disciples’ response is also nuanced; in Matthew the disciples simply “marvelled” (Greek: *thaumazó*). In Luke the disciples were “afraid” (*phobeó*) and “wondered” (*thaumazó*), but in Mark the disciples were “afraid” (*deloi*) and “feared” (*phobeó*). This description is fitting for Mark’s Gospel, since fear is one of the last emotions recorded in Mark’s Gospel. (See Mark 16:8.)

Daily Devotion

“Peace Be Still” was a hymn written in 1874 to teach Sunday school children about Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4. After a rise in popularity, it eventually fell into obscurity until James Cleveland revived it in the 1950s.

Cleveland was a songwriter, arranger, and pioneer of the modern choir recording movement. Just days before recording the hymn in 1963, the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing occurred in Birmingham, Alabama. When asked if the hymn was a protest to the bombing, Cleveland said no.

Years later when members of the choir were asked if they were scared when recording the hymn in the aftermath of the bombing, they declared, “We weren’t so disturbed that we couldn’t serve the Lord. We knew the Lord, and we were there to praise and lift up His name” (*The Journal of Gospel Music*).

No storm is so tempestuous that Jesus cannot calm it. May we have the same testimony as the church in Alabama: “We weren’t so disturbed that we couldn’t serve the Lord.”



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

Luke 8:23-25

²³ But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

²⁴ And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

²⁵ And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Biblical Insight

Luke's account of Jesus' question to the disciples after the calming of the storm insinuates that they completely lacked faith because Jesus asked, "Where is your faith?" Whereas Matthew's version charged the disciples as having "little faith," Mark and Luke's Gospels insinuated that the disciples had no faith at all. These accounts are not contradictory; they reflect the different emphases the Gospel writers were addressing. Each of the disciples would have their faith tested and stretched over the course of their journey of following Jesus, and He patiently led them in growing to become leaders of the early church.

Daily Devotion

Biosphere 2 is an artificial environment created as a research tool for scientists to study Earth's ecosystems including deserts, rain forests, and even an ocean. One of the largest discoveries within Biosphere 2 was that trees grew more rapidly there than they grew outside the dome, but they also fell over before reaching maturation. When examining the root systems and layers of bark, scientists discovered a deficiency of stress wood.

Stress wood is what strengthens a tree and prevents collapse. It can only be developed when trees experience winds and storms. Without the stress of storms, trees have no strength.

James 1:2-4 tells us to consider trials as pure joy because the testing of faith will lead to perseverance and ultimately spiritual maturity. If you are currently experiencing a trial, find time to praise God. Consider the trial as God's way of strengthening your faith.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
